SPECIAL A-KO ISSUE!

manga NEWSWATCH

7

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BRUCE LEWIS INTERVIEW

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Manga NEWSWATCH 7

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL- *A-k0! Gusuenteit. Plus a special contest inside.....pg* ***2***

MN UPDATE- *Mermaids Scar, Alita (again, sigh), Ninja High gets cold... pg* ***3***

NEWSWATCH NEWSNOTES- *Just too much to list right now..... pg* ***6***

THE MANGA INQUIRER- *Manga fans want to know! Werewolves spoted by the folks at Viz..... pg* ***8***

PROJECTING SUCCESS- *We take a look into the hottest manga related release ..... pg* ***9***

INTERVIEW: U.S. MANGA CORPS'S JOHN O'DONNELL-*A chat with the man who's company is revolutionizing the anime industry..... pg* ***11***

INTERVIEW: BRUCE LEWIS- *Look out fans! This one may hurt you more than it does him. We speak with the man who wants to Kill Fandom Now! about his highly controversial Robotech series..... pg* ***14***

MOVIE REVIEW: CITY HUNTER- *Michael Palmairi gives an in-depth critique of one of our most highly recommended movies..... pg* ***20***

GAVER-SENSEI'S POCKET REVIEWS- *He's back! With a vengeance.....pg* ***22***

THE NETWATCH- *Russel Rezaian explains one off the fastest growing phenomenons .....pg* ***24***

IKEDA, THE MYSTIC NINJA- *A light hearted adventure from the talented minds of Richard Jordan and David Rios..... pg* ***26***

Editorial

This issue, we've got the dig on the most highly anticipated anime related comic ever put out since the genre developed: ***Project A-Ko!*** And guess what? It won't be existing in the monochromatic dimension of black and white either (not that that's a bad place, mind you). It's **full color!** *Malibu Comics* has pulled out all the stops on this one, from special retailer incentives to an easy coupon program in which you can get a rare **Project A-Ko Soundtrack**. This issue also boasts two very special interviews, one with U.S. Manga Corps.'s John O'Donnell, and one with the ever so controversial Bruce Lewis (K.O.A.M.), writer/artist of Eternity's hottest book, **Invid War: Aftermath.** There's the usual bunch of reviews and articles in this issue, plus a nifty comic feature by two very talented guys, Richard Jordan and Dave Rios (check out their back up in Zillion #4).So read, enjoy and look for us next time when we give you a rundown on all the Summer hits of '94.
-Zip Beatty!

Contributor's info: Never send originals. Please send stats or good copies. Include your name, address and phone number. Always include an S.A.S.E. for response. Send all submissions to **Submissions Editor, Manga Newswatch, 51795 Old Mill Rd., South Bend, IN, 46637.**
Writers- submissions should be double spaced typed.
Artists- pin-ups, may be done on 8 1/2 X 11, comic shorts should be no longer than 8 pages.

JUST FOR FUN!!! A-KO TRIVIA CONTEST

Since we've never done a contest yet, we figure now is as good a time as any. Just answer the following question correctly and you could win your own *Project A-ko I* and *II* video tapes. You have to read the comics, though. Winners will be announced in a near future issue of Manga Newswatch or you may send a S.A.S.E. for a list of winners (there will be 6). Deadline is July 1st. Ok (or actually, Ko), put your thinking cap on:

What are the names of B-ko's four cohorts?

Good luck and don't forget to specify which version you want, English dubbed or subtitled.

MN UpDate:

Fish people, machine people and... ninjas, oh my!

Mermaid sightings

First published in English as one of two manga features in Animerica magazine, Rumiko Takahashi's uniquely macabre "mermaid" series gets a new lease on (eternal) life this April when Viz Comics debuts its brand-new ***Mermaid's Scar*** four-issue mini-series.

"Like *Mermaid's Forest*, our new **Mermaids's Scar** manga mini-series will continue to explore the meaning of immortality in its own inimitable fashion," says Viz Comics Assistant Editor Toshifumi Yoshida. "But the greatest thing about the new series is that we'll finally get to see the original story behind the recent Mermaid's Scar OAV that was released by Viz Video. This is definitely a must-buy series for all Takahashi fans."

Partake of the mermaid's flesh, the legend says, and you'll live forever, but what happens when you don't want to be immortal anymore? As immortal companions Yuta and Mana discover, living forever isn't necessarily such a good thing. Loneliness, unhappiness and greed are only a few of the issues faced by the eternally young and beautiful pair, as they journey from place to place searching for some way to live a "normal" life.

"Takahashi's mermaid series is so interesting precisely because it plays on such timeless themes," says Viz Comics Editor Trish Ledoux. "Like the many vampire and other 'eternal life' novels, which are so in vogue at the moment, ***Mermaid's Scar*** addresses a very unlikely scenario with some eminently plausible characterizations. Takahashi's definitely on a par with *Interview With the Vampire* creator Anne Rice when it comes to creating hauntingly memorable characters."

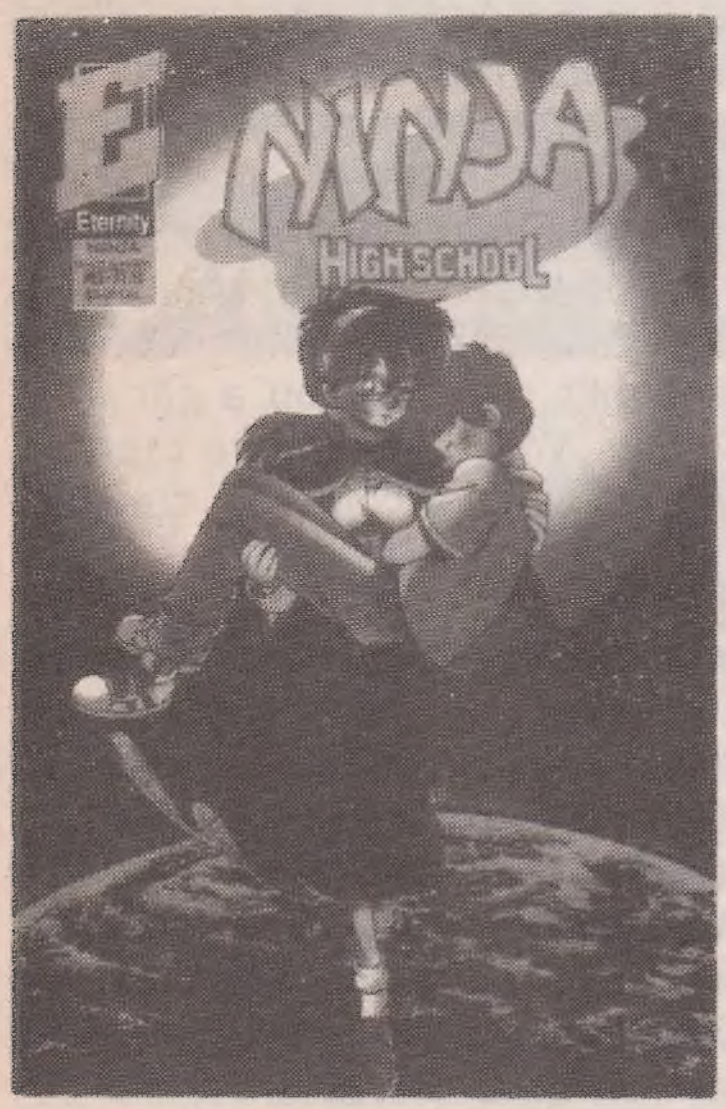
Mermaid's Scar, the second Japanese graphic novel released in Takahashi's so-called mermaid saga is a compilation of the fourth to seventh chapters of the original Japanese story. The animated version of the series' eponymous sixth chapter is now on sale as an English-dubbed OAV from Viz Video. *Mermaid Forest*, the first "mermaid" OAV, was released subtitled in English by New York based U.S. Manga Corps in March, 1993.

The first 32-page issue of the ***Mermaid's Scar*** monthly black and white mini-series will retail for $2.75 USA/$3.75 CAN. on April 5th 1994.

Class reunion

After 6 years with Eternity Comics (a division of Malibu Comics) Ben Dunn's American manga series ***Ninja High School*** returns to the Antarctic Press.

"The decision to leave Malibu was a difficult one" according to Dunn, "but since they are focusing more and more on their *Ultraverse* and *Bravura* material it became increasingly apparent that ***NHS*** did not fit in the current mold of comics that Malibu was publishing. Therefore a mutual agreement was reached to end the series at Eternity Comics and continue the series at Antarctic Press. "Eternity and Malibu Comics have treated me very well these past years but I felt that NHS interests would best be served by



After seven years of publishing NHS, #39 is the last Eternity issue

Antarctic Press." Ben Dunn will still be doing work for Malibu Comics however, working on the full color **Project:A-Ko** series scheduled for March, 1994 release.

Antarctic Press originally published ***NHS*** as a three-issue mini-series and added a fourth issue before being picked up by Eternity Comics in 1988. It has run continuously since then and has become the oldest and longest running manga inspired series in the U.S. spawning other mini-series, spin-offs, and annuals. The regular series is now on its 40th issue. It also has enjoyed newsstand distribution with 13 color issues to date. It has also crossed over with ever popular *Speed Racer* in a 4-issue series that was published by Malibu and NOW comics. Currently ***NHS*** has the longest running independent comics annual *The Ninja High School Yearbook* which is now in its fifth year. It also introduced the concept of the Japanese Sentai superhero to American audiences with *Zetramen* whose TV counterparts are the super-popular *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers.*

All rights will soon revert back to Ben Dunn and Antarctic Press, but the publication change over will be in effect immediately. Therefore all orders from retailers for the regular series to Eternity Comics are cancelled. Antarctic Press will do a new solicitation for an all new ***NHS*** No. 40 (not the one originally solicited). This will be a special return issue and promises to bring back the laughs, thrills, and action that made ***NHS*** such a cult hit. Look for the all new AP series to begin in April of 1994.

Alita: not just a cyborg-bounty hunter, a graphic nove too!

In the Spring of 1992, Viz Comics released a brand new comic title called *Battle Angel Alita,* created by, then relatively unknown artist, Yukito Kishiro. In the two years since its release, Alita has become one of the best loved and one of the best-selling manga titles released in America. Battle Angel Alita

Part One was a nine-issue series which grew in popularity and demand with each ensuing issue. "The visuals were stunning - action packed, emotion-laden," comments Fred Burke, writer and co-translator of the series," "The story was a knockout - mythic, resonant. It had all the signs of a runaway smash hit." The popularity of the manga series prompted the August, 1993 release of the hit *OAV Battle Angel* which increased Alita's popularity even more. Alita's sweet and gentle soul, her beauty and her strength, attracted thousands of fans throughout North America. Viz was swamped with reorders for back issues and sales jumped by a thousand each month. Fan letters also poured in from all over North America, demanding a compilation of ***Part One*** so that they could follow their favorite heroine without any interruption in the story-line.

Prompted by these fervent requests, Viz Comics is proud to announce the release of the ***Battle Angel Alita Gaphic Novel*** on March 22, 1994 at the retail price of $16.95. This single-volume, 244-page trade paperback compiles all nine issues of ***Part One*** in its entirety and captures all of the passion and the drama of this poignant action-adventure series.

"*Battle Angle Alita* is a story of struggle, fought not only by the story's eponymous heroine but by the citizens of Kishiro's world itself," says Viz Comics editor Trish Ledoux. "Even in a city built entirely of junk, cast down from the utopian city of Tiphares which hovers eternally above, characters search not only for a way to survive, but for a reason to live." ***Battle Angel Alita Graphic Novel*** tells the provocative tale of a young cyborg woman's search for her identity and her own humanity amidst great adversity and danger. Under the shadows of the glittering city of Tiphares, masses of humans and cyborgs struggle to survive among the scrapyard town and its factories. In the midst of this dark world filled with thugs and criminals who live beyond the bounds of the law, emerges a beautiful young woman, a cyborg who was salvaged from the ruins of the scrapyard by a brilliant cyberphysician named Ido. She remembers nothing about her past of of how she came to the scrapyard city but quickly re-discovers amazing

fighting abilities and maneuvers which she uses instinctively whenever she encounters danger. She is given her name "Alita" by Ido with whom she develops a distinct bond. Together, Ido and Alita work as hunter-warriors, bounty hunters who face such notorious criminals as Makaku, a psychotic endorfin addict who crawled out of the gutter to terrorize the inhabitants of the scrapyard city.

The ***Battle Angle Alita Graphic Novel*** Ships on March 22, 1993.

Newswatch Newsnotes:

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Epic will be releasing the Akira Trade Paperback #10. It collects issues #28 to 30 of the Katsuhiro Otomo classic and retails at $17.95. Also regarding Akira, the title won the *1993 Harvey Award for Best American Edition of Foreign Material.* The series is translated by Jo Duffy. **Antarctic Press** has announced a release date for *Iczer-1,* based on the anime of the same name. It is about a "warrior that arrives on Earth to protect the planet from destruction". It is recommended for mature readers and will start in April of 1994 as monthly 32 page book by Hirano Toshihiro and Moriki Yasuhiro, and retails at $2.95. **Viz** will release a one shot graphic novel compilation of Macross II. The series received a great amount of attention and media coverage when it first debuted in 1992. Since then, several issues are out of print and hard to find. The compilation contains all ten of the issues written and illustrated by Tsuguo Okazaki. It's 304 pages, black and white, and will retail at $16.95 U.S./ $24.25 Canada. The Macross II Graphic Novel is scheduled to be released on April 19. **Sequels, sequels, sequels...** there are confirmed and non-confirmed reports of new anime of the following favorites: *Bubblegum Crisis, Orguss, Patlabor* and *Borgman.* **Harmony Gold** is looking into new properties and they're focusing on bringing over a new anime series. Nothing was official at the time of this report, but they are looking to match

Fighting for market share, Viz's *Street Fighter II*

the success of their *Robotech* series. **Astro Boy** will be available in color if Landmark Inc. has their way. The company is planing on colorizing the original black and white episodes and adding new soundtracks to them. **Robotech II, Book Three** will be written as well as drawn by the Waltrips starting with issue number 7 shipping in April of '94. The two brothers, who have been working on the title for over five years now say that they'll be throwing in a surprise or two here and there, so that the comic isn't exactly a straight adaptation of the novels. **Street Fighter II** will debut this April in manga form through a co-effort of Seattle's Tokuma Publishing and Viz Comics. This makes the second time the hit video game (no pun intended) has been published as a comic in the U.S. The first time was the Malibu version that CapCom Japan blew off because of their dislike of the adaptation even though according to the agreement, only CapCom U.S.A. was supposed to have final approvals power (and they did approve it). Now the Japanese million seller will translate from Xenon's Masaomi Kanazaki. Popularity should be boosted by the release of a live-action movie coming this summer. It will be directed by Steven (DIE HARD, DIE HARD II, RUNNING MAN) de Souza. Coincidentally enough, also available in April is *The Street Fighter Graphic Novel* from Malibu. It collects the first and only three issues that CapCom allowed them to publish in a special (limited to 5,000) edition. That version was written by Len Strazewski and drawn by Don Hillsman and Jeff Whiting. But Malibu is back on the horse again with a rival series of another popular arcade game, *Mortal Kombat.* **Dark Horse** hits manga month (that's March y'know) with the eagerly awaited return of Adam Warren's *Bubblegum Crisis*. The popular cyberpunk/technothriller titled *Bubblegum Crisis: Grand Mal* gets a helping hand from Robert DeJesus.

The Swiss Bikini Team? No, it's Warren's **Crisis** *chicks*

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"VIZ EXPOSED TO DREADED LYCAN-THROPY DISEASE"

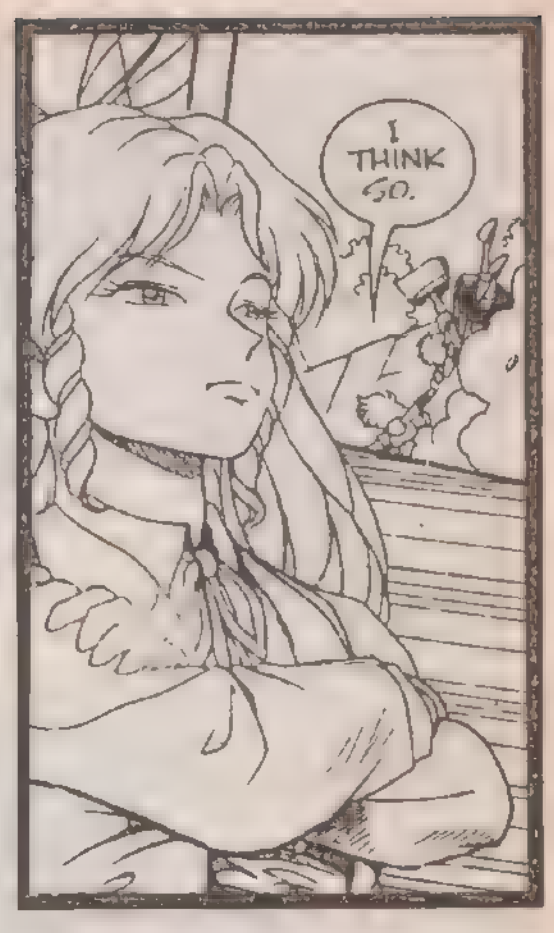
JAPANESE WEREWOLF TEARS INTO STORES IN MARCH

Viz Comics is proud to announce the March 1994 release of one of the most exciting manga titles ever released in English, **Lycanthrope Leo**. This new title, bearing the **Viz Premiere Comics** imprint, is a dark fantasy set in modern-day Japan which tells the tale of a secret race of lycanthropes, or were-beasts, who live among us. This group is divided between carnivorous and herbivorous lycanthropes who are all systematically persecuted by a paranoid group of "hunters", humans who are driven by the fear that lycanthropes threaten the human race. *Lycanthrope Leo* not only stands apart from most manga titles that have been released in North America because of its dark fantasy-themed storyline, but is also unique within the realm of fantasy titles because of it contemporary setting and highly developed characters. This seven-issue series is priced at $2.95 for each issue and will be shipped in March. Because this is the first dark fantasy-based manga title ever offered in English, *Lycanthrope Leo* will also be of particular interest to collectors as well as to all fans of manga and fantasy titles.

"We always strive to offer our readers a wide spectrum of manga genres," comments **Viz Comics** Associate Editor Toshi Yoshida. *"Lycanthrope Leo* stands apart from any other titles in this genre and it is a title that I've personally loved in the original Japanese," he continues. "I want all of our readers to experience the same excitement that I felt when I first picked up this title".

In the first issue, we meet Leo, an ordinary teenager leading an ordinary life. He attends a regular high school, runs on the high school track team and lives the life of a normal adolescent. All of this begins to change, however, after Leo turns seventeen. All of a sudden his body seems to take on a life if its own. Leo is much stronger and more physically attuned than he once was. During track practice, he breaks Carl Lewis' world record! However, his family is less than enthusiastic to hear the news of his track success. His father suddenly becomes very angry and even the family dog begins to growl and snap whenever Leo is around. News of Leo's incredible feats at track practice do not go unnoticed by everyone, however and suddenly he becomes a target. Leo must suddenly face the devastating secret about himself that will change the course of his life forever. *Lycanthrope Leo* ships March 1st.

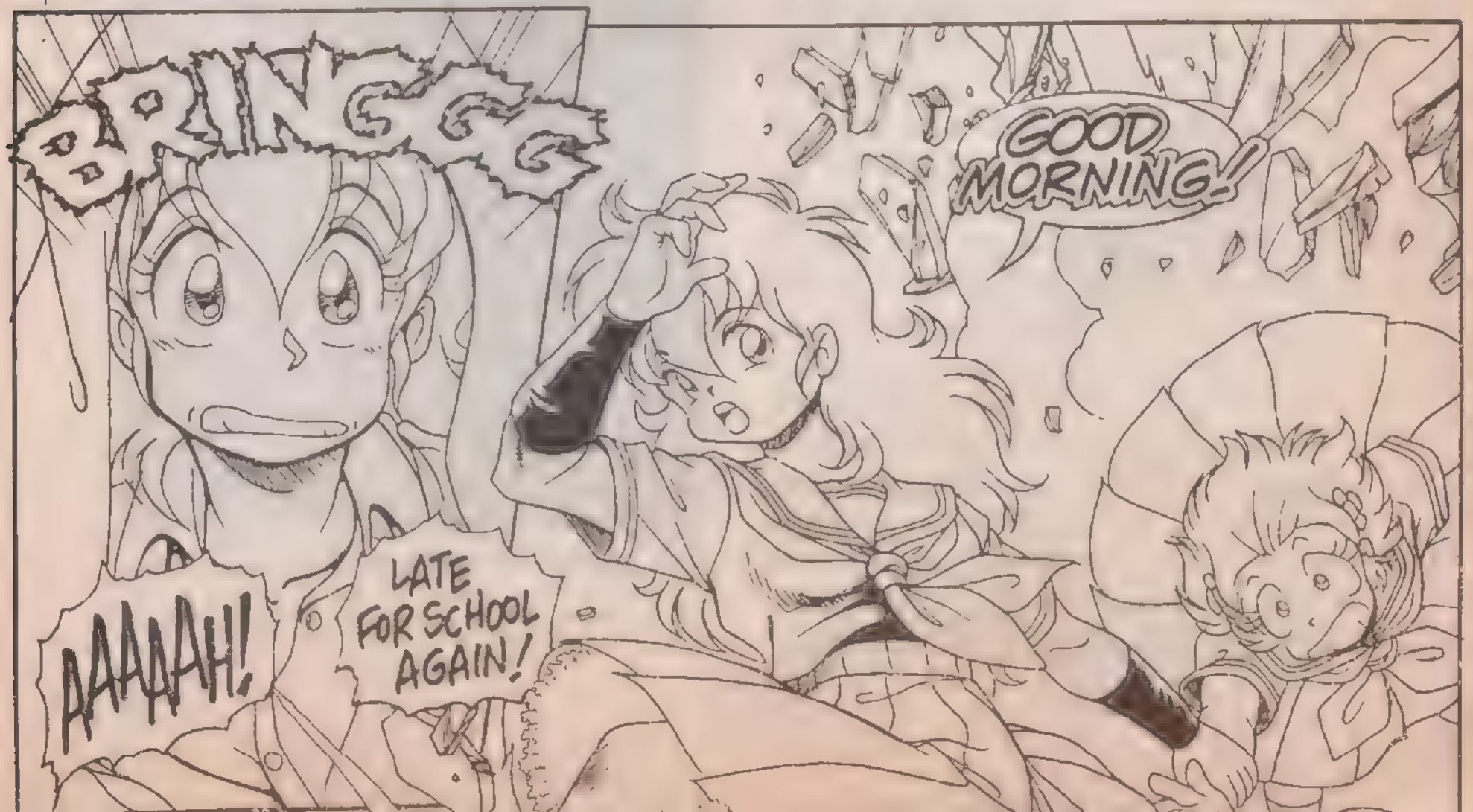
PROJECTing success for A-KO!



The fan following for Japanese animation in the United States is growing by the day. A seemingly unending stream of films and videos from Japan has been migrating across the Pacific, each one different from the last. But few of these are making as strong or unusual an impact as ***Project A-ko,*** which made it's cinematic debut in 1985.

As is the case with other anime films that have found a general audience after being subtitled or dubbed, ***A-ko*** was a legend in the anime fan community long before it became commercially available. ***A-ko*** utilized multi-layered, razor sharp, parodies of other anime films, and mimicked a few American icons, which it threw in for good measure. Viewing ***A-ko*** in it's original form and spotting all the sight gags became a reward for those who had endured the rigorous hardships of collecting and dissecting Japanese animation on video tape. Now that ***Project A-ko*** has come to comics, everyone will have a chance to take part in the fun.

Bringing this hilarious film to print in America was an arduous process, the integral player in which was John O' Donnell, Managing Director of the New York-based **U.S. Manga Corps.** Since 1989, O' Donnell has been obtaining one film after another for subtitling and domestic release, eventually becoming the premiere source of licensed anime videos in the United States. From the begin-



ning, O' Donnell knew ***Project A-ko*** would be an exciting addition to his lineup.

"We know ***A-ko*** was an anime masterpiece and personally, all of us at U.S.M.C. loved it, so we wanted to do all we could to introduce ***A-ko*** and her friends to mainstream America," John O' Donnell said.

After it's initial release, ***A-ko*** proved so popular, O' Donnell decided to expand it's audience by releasing a second version that would be fully dubbed in English. A special licensing agreement with Great Britain's *Island World Entertainment* gave **U.S. Manga Corps** the production facility it needed to realize this ambition, and between them, the two companies co-produced one of the finest full-dubbed anime films Americans have had the pleasure of watching. But there was still more to be done—***Project A-ko*** had a lot of mileage ;eft, and it was time to bring it to the comic book reading audience as well. Naturally, O' Donnell's first choice to make it happen was *Antarctic Press*' Ben Dunn, creator and artist of the long-running fan favorite ***Ninja High School***, which took more than a little of it's impetus from ***A-ko*** itself. The involvement of **Malibu Comics** later brought me into the picture as adapter, the person responsible for breaking the film down into comic book pages, polishing the script, and turning layouts over to Ben to work his penciling magic. From there, the ever-able Shon Howell (A.K.A."Captain Amazing Paper") inked it, color designer Albert Deschesne gave it hue, and the wizards of **Malibu's** computer coloring division added the finishing flourish. The result is a loving-ly-made adaptation that will please not only long-standing ***A-ko*** fans, but introduce a whole new audience to it's manic charm.

Interestingly, ***A-ko***'s ultimate gag is one that only American superhero fans can fully appreciate. Keep your eyes peeled while reading issue four!

PROJECT A-KO ROCKS!

In an aggressive marketing plan that exceeds that of any manga/anime promotion to date (this includes securing the cover of the Capital City Distributors March Manga Month catalog and a raging advertising blitz), Malibu Comics in association with U.S.M.C. is putting together a special chase program. For collecting coupons in all four issues plus a special coupon insert in the PROJECT A-KO II video, the fan will receive a rare, limited edition A-Ko soundtrack featuring songs from the movie.

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Interview: U.S. Manga Corps's JOHN O'DONNELL

U.S. Manga Corps™ is the main Japanimation label for **Central Park Media**, the leading publisher and distributor of Japanese anime in North America today. **CPM** publishes Japanese animations under the label names **Central Park Media** (for general audience and family anime), **U.S. Manga Corps™** (for primarily action and science fiction anime aimed at the high school and older audience) and Anime 18 (for anime suitable to the 18 and older audience only).

In addition to publishing its own anime, **CPM** distributes the anime of several top independent suppliers, such as *A.D. Vision, The Right Stuff, U.S. Renditions (including LA Hero),* and *Viz.* **CPM**'s activities in this regard are aimed primarily at the video industry, which did not take anime seriously until **Central Park Media** began its professional distribution approach to the genre. As a result of **CPM**'s distribution efforts, *Blockbuster, Musicland, Tower Video* and many other leading chains have created in-store Japanimation sections, and are now making anime available to the mass market audience for the first time.

Central Park Media has been in business as a Manhattan-based specialty video publisher since 1990. Its founders and executives are long-term veterans of the record and video industries. John O'Donnell, **CPM**'s Managing Director, was the founder of *Sony Video Software Company*, Sony's first venture into "software," many years before *Sony* bought *Columbia* and *CBS Records.*

MN: You started at Sony. Were you interested in translating anime back then?

JO'D: Yes. Sony Music Entertainment Japan (at the time, known as CBS-Sony Records), was active in producing and releasing anime. I was actually at the kick-off press conference in Tokyo which announced the future production of **Gall Force**, in 1979! Our first anime release, however, was the TV version of Voltrons, for which we received RIAA gold and platinum sales awards. This was the experience that convinced me that Japanese animation could be successful in the U.S.

MN: What got you started in translations?

JO'D: After leaving Sony to set up my own business, I was looking for a new genre to help spearhead and develop. At Sony, we were the first company to actively market music videos, creating the concept of short-length videos we called Video 45's. We were the first company to license MTV-style music clips, and release them on video at low price points. That experience in helping to create an entire new category of video programming was a lot of fun, and I wanted the chance to do it again with a new genre. Japanimation was ideal for this, especially since I personally enjoy the programming.

MN: What were your first choices for production?

JO'D: The first programming we licensed was selected to appeal to a non-children market. We wanted programs that high school, college, and older fans would enjoy, so we licensed **Project A-ko, Dominion: Tank Police, M.D. Geist,** and several other classic anime to get the ball rolling. We wanted to build upon the videos by expanding into other media, such as comic book video games, etc. As we had hoped, these proved to be successful, and got us started on the path to becoming the largest supplier in the Japanimation business today.

MN:What's the hardest part on your

end of the business?

JO'D: Well, there are a lot of hard parts. Licensing anime following professional guidelines can be very difficult, due to the nature of the Japanese business culture in general, and the anime industry in particular. Trying to understand what will and will not be successful in America is hard, since it's such a new industry. Maintaining the kinds of quality control standards we strive for is very expensive and time-consuming. We recently spent several thousand dollars to reprint one of four packages, for example, because a translation mistake had snuck onto the box. Many other companies would have said, "No big deal, they'll never know," and released it anyway. We have great respect for our customers, so we won't knowingly release anything with an error. Finally, maintain our release schedule is difficult. We are the only anime company to have met every street date we ever announced. We have never shipped a program even one day late. No other anime company can make this statement, and I'll bet most comic book companies can't, either.

MN: What is your all time favorite Japanese production (and why)?

JO'D: I'd have to say it's **Project A-ko.** I love the main characters, and the multi-leveled script. Each girl has a tremendously unique and appealing character. A-ko is strong, self-determining, and in charge - a very modern woman. B-ko is incredibly intelligent and scheming, but very patrician. C-ko is such a total bubble-head that she ends up being cute. Miss Ayumi is the kind of teacher I wish I had in school. The other characters play off of some of the icons of anime: Mari is a parody of *Fist of the North Star*, Captain Napolitolita is a very clear take-off on *Captain Harlock*, etc. The more you learn about anime in general, the more you see in **Project A-ko.** What's more, the artwork and music are superb, and the soundtrack is absolutely stunning in full hi-fi stereo. All in all, one of the top anime series of all time, IMHO.

The Dallas Museum of Art showcased **Project A-ko,** saying it was one of the best examples of anime in the entire post-war era! You can't get much better credibility than that.

MN: What is your favorite manga (and why)?

JO'D: I hope this doesn't sound horrible, but I grew up on *Spiderman*, and my current favorite comic books are actually Frank Miller's *Batmans.* I love the film noir style of his *Dark Knight.*

In terms of the manga genre, I love *Ninja High School,* which is a hybrid manga-comic book. As you know, of course, it was inspired by **Project A-ko** in the first place. What is also interesting is that seeing Ninja High School in a comic book shop in 1989 was one of the main reasons why I launched U.S. Manga Corps™ : I thought that if the American market went so far as to embrace a American version of a Japanese-style manga based on school girls in sailor uniforms, that we had a good chance for success with our anime. I didn't know at the time, of course, that *NHS* was so strongly influenced by **Project A-ko.** The fact that we asked Ben Dunn of *Ninja High School* to draw the **Project A-ko** comic book makes all the more interesting. What goes around, comes around, huh? Call it karma, dude.

MN: You're doing a special A-ko sound track as part of the mini-series promotion. Do you plan on doing any more sound tracks as collectibles?

JO'D: Yes. We have just launched a new division, called **MangaMusic™** , to handle our soundtracks. The **Project A-ko Original Soundtrack** will be the

first of many soundtrack releases. We think that the music for the anime is usually pretty good, and by licensing the rights for local manufacturing, we can provide soundtracks to the fans at more reasonable prices than import albums. You'll hear more about our plans in the regard as time goes on.

MN: What is the one project from USMC that its success has surprised you?

JO'D: We are absolutely flabbergasted at the success of the five-tape, $99.95 **Overfiend Perfect Collection.** We knew that it would be popular, but at that price point and in Japanese with subtitles, we didn't think it would be the mass market success that it is.

MN: What Is the one project from USMC that you think is underrated?

JO'D: **Dog Soldier**. It's a Rambo knockoff, with lots of action, fighting, intricate plot and deep levels of characterization. For some reason, the hard core anime fans didn't really accept this program in its subtitled form as much as we'd have liked. After we dub it, though, I have no doubt it will be one of the top sellers in the mass market.

MN: What can we expect to see in the future from Central Park Media?

JO'D: A continuing dedication to releasing Japanimation in all forms and styles.

This year our *Central Park Media* label will release over twenty animations based on the most famous novels in Japan, as part of our *Animated Classics of Japanese Literature* series. These include novels by the Nobel-Prize winning *Yasunari Kawabata*, the famous right-wing suicide genius, Yukio Mishima, and many other of Japan's finest literary talents.

USMC will continue to develop the general entertainment market, and we'll release all of the remaining Project A-ko episodes in 1994. We're having a huge success with a new series, The Legend of Arislan, which is one of the most beautiful animations I've ever seen.

Anime 18™ will release more controversial programming aimed at an older, more sophisticated market.

By positioning our titles at very clear segments of the overall market, we hope to accomplish the goal of introducing America to a major source of quality animated story-telling, suitable for all kinds of audiences and tastes.

And, with Malibu's help, we expect to see Project A-Ko comics become one of the best selling manga of all time!

Along with the anime classic, Project A-ko, CPM leads the way in introducing Japanimation to the U.S. market with such hard hitting releases as MD GEIST and many, many others.

The Bruce Lewis Interview by Matt A. Kudasai

Bruce Lewis is notorious for being an outspoken rebel in the manga/anime community, water pistol fights and panel disruptions not withstanding. He hails from Dallas, Texas and moved to California where he began work at Malibu Comics as a computer designer in May of '93. When Bill Spangler and Tim Eldred ended ***Robotech Invid War,*** *Bruce began work on the highly controversial Robotech title,* ***Invid War Aftermath*** *at the request of Malibu's licensing and Eternity editor, Mark Paniccia. "Bruce is a genius!", exclaims Paniccia, "His series has breathed new life into the world of* ***Robotech.*** *It's a book I'm very proud of." MN's Matt A. Kudasai got a rare opportunity to talk to Bruce about his work on* ***Aftermath,*** *a few personal opinions and his infamous hatred towards fandom.*

MN: When did you first get the idea for *Aftermath?*

BL: *Aftermath* was really just one of those wild hairs, a total sperm-of-the-moment thing I came up with just after I started working for Malibu full-time. I was searching about for a freelance job to augment my already-massive Malibu paycheck, and it just so happened that Tim [Eldred] and Bill [Spangler] wanted to get the hell out of *Robotech*, so I figured, "Hey, it's a buck."

MN: So you weren't motivated by any great love of *Robotech.*

BL: Well, I... love of *Robotech*? Look, the day I "love" any TV show, please shoot me. I "love" my wife. *Robotech*, on the other hand, is a TV cartoon show. How can anyone "love" a zero-dimensional, virtual image on a phosphor screen, I ask you.

MN: It's a figure of speech.

BL: Did you know in German you can't do that? If you said, "Ich liebe torte"—I love cake—in German it would sound like, "I'm in love with a cake." Kind of like Lucille Ball in those old Britannica ads: "Would you believe? I fell in love with an encyclopedia." No, you want to say, "Ich esse torte gern", "I gladly eat cake." Or something like that.

MN: Ich bin ein Robotecher.

BL: "Ich bin ein hopeless loser" is more like it. Anyone who "loves" any TV show is just that—a loser.

MN: Isn't that kind of judgmental?

BL: You're damn tootin' it is.

MN: You're saying that *Robotech* fans are hopeless losers? They're paying your salary!

BL: The great guru "Bob" Dobbs once said, "They may be Pink, but their money's green," which pretty much sums up my attitude towards "fandom", *Robotech* or otherwise. I'm more than happy to take their money, but that doesn't mean I have to sleep with them! Except the good-looking ones, of course. Just kidding about that last part, Honey...

MN: I've heard a lot about the so-called "kill fandom" movement. Are you a part of all that?

BL: I fully support the *Kill Fandom Now!* organization—

MN: They're organized?

BL: Sure, just like AA Meetings, telethons, mass mailings, the list goes on and on. *Kill Fandom Now!* is an actual organization dedicated to the destruction of "fandom", regardless of type or genre afilliation.

MN: For god's sake, why?

BL: Simple: evolution. When an organism can no longer fulfill its purpose, it's time to move over. Fandom was created in the thirties to support the writings of the early SF writers, and it did that job admirably, but by the late '40s SF was firmly established in the field. Yet did fandom die? Hell no! It became instead a network for mutual masturbation, a way for millions of geeky little nobodies to occupy their worthless hours while the other guys in their seventh-grade class were out smoking reefer and getting hand jobs behind the bleachers. Now, of course, fandom has become totally decadent, spawning so-called "writers of the future" who seem to be stuck telling each other the same damn stories over and over: "shared worlds," "so-and-so cycles", over and over. It's sickening.

MN: So what? If it makes people happy—

BL: Hey, child abuse makes some people happy—

MN: But child abuse has a victim: the child. Fandom—

BL: Has its victims, too. First among these are the very things the fans worship: *Star Trek, Robotech,* you name it. Let's look at Trek fandom. It started out as a bunch of dirty old broads with way too much free time on their hands back in the sixties. These frustrated housefraus fell in love with Spock and suddenly we had fanzines, we had mail campaigns, we had rubber Spock ears at the five and dime. Yet it served a purpose: it kept the show on the air long past its bedtime and it introduced the world to *Star Trek*. Fine and dandy. With America's interest piqued, the studio responded and the movies came out. Fine. Unfortunately, it

didn't stop there. It kept going, and going, even after the TV show was going strong again and all the actors' kids had degrees in dental surgery. No, it kept going—and produced the Trekkies. Trekkies are fans for whom fandom is no longer a way to keep a good show on TV, no longer Just a damned Hobby. To the Trekkie, *Fandom Is a Way of Life*—fandom **IS** life. If you've ever been to a convention you know what I mean. To the fan, their hobby has become the one thing that gives their life structure and meaning, the axis around which their paltry existence revolves. This used to be he role of religion. Now, instead of the Ten Commandments, we have the Prime Directive.

MN: Whew. But how does this make *Star Trek*, for example, a "victim"?

BL: Simple. Guilt by association. When you have this cult—and it is a cult, just like David Koresh's guys—this cult of asshole losers dressing up in badly-sewn home-made Klingon outfits and zapping each other with phasers, any nice, normal, job-holding people who might ordinarily enjoy *Star Trek* are instantly going to fold their wallets back into their pockets and run like hell for the nearest exit. I mean, no TV show is worth the humiliation of being associated with a smelly, overweight 35-year-old woman in a Spandex Spock shirt who insists on telling you the details of her latest "fan fiction" masterpiece. I mean, come on. And so, by their fannish behavior, the Trekkie drives away those who might eventually have come to enjoy *Star Trek*. Fandom is killing *Star Trek*. To save *Star Trek*, we must therefore kill fandom—now!

MN: But what has this got to do with *Robotech?*

BL: Same principle applies. Substitute "Robotech" for "Star Trek" in my previous rant and you get the same result. Or maybe it's *Blake's Seven, Beauty and the Beast, Robin Hood,* whatever. "Fan" is short for "fanatic", and fanatics frighten me. They're killing my hobbies with their fandom. By association, things I used to enjoy, like *Star Trek* and, yeah, *Robotech*, have become tainted by the touch of geeky, gormless fandom. I say kill fandom now, and you can quote me on that.

MN: Are you a fan of anything?

BL: Yeah. I'm a fan of beer, the Bill of Rights, and Bruce Lewis.

MN: I meant—

BL: Well, *SeaQuest* is okay, too.

MN: Some have called your *Aftermath* storyline "controversial". Why do you think that is?

BL: Because it is. It represents a sea of change in the way *Robotech* stories are told.

MN: Most of the controversy I've heard is over your treatment of favorite characters. Let's go down the list. Scott Bernard, the leader of the *Robotech* freedom fighters in the TV show has become—

BL: A ruthless dictator. So?

MN: But he's supposed to be a good guy!

BL: So? Does that mean he has to be a mainstream, center-right member of the Democratic Party?

MN: A few fans say it's way out of character.

BL: Okay. First, it's ten years after the war. People change a lot in ten years. Are you the same Matt Kudasai you were in 1984?

MN: No.

BL: Of course not. Why should Scott Bernard be? Second: Scott was always the military hardass of the group. Now it's a decade later, he's disillusioned, he's bitter, he's alone. Along comes Nova Satori, this total conniving schemer, a genius really, and Scott's not so bright, and she basically offers him his life back in exchange for using his military guts to set up a little dictatorship somewhere. Is he going to fall back on that hup-

A rabid Scott Bernard! The fans hate it, but they're buying the book.

two-three-four? You bet he is. Earth by this time is basically total chaotic hell, so the anal, justifying part of Scott's mind is telling him, "Yeah, if you knock a few heads, you'll be doing it for their own good, so go ahead." He's a real missionary, that way. Scott was no hippy with flowers in his hair even during the good times, so why the fuss about him becoming Supreme Commander? He grew up in a total dictatorship, for Christ's sake: the military!

"Scott was no hippy with flowers in his hair even during the good times..."

MN: Nova Satori?

BL: Always a bitch. Really, she started off as a minor-league security goon and just got worse as things got worse. But because she's a totally hot babe, big-egoed apes like Anatole Leonard and so forth instantly melt like chocolate in her paws, and then she basically kicks their ass for them. I like Nova Satori in a lot of ways. In some ways she's the most realistic and attractive character in *Robotech*. Definitely one of the smartest.

MN: Rook and Rand?

BL: Oooh. That was the big one for me. I knew that the cutesy foxhole love affair between Rook and Rand had to go. Such things just never last in the real world. Rook was an Army brat, not some backwoods *Sara Plain and Tall* like country-boy Rand Somersville would have wanted, and there was just no way she was going to stay in Belmont and bake cookies for Rand after a lifetime of dodging Malcontent attacks and kicking biker ass. No way. So the minute Nova shows up, every alarm bell on her panel goes off and she's off into the Wilds for four months with her.

MN: In *Aftermath,* what's the connection between Nova and Rand?

BL: Well, there **is** a bond between them. It has to do with something that happened back in Rook's hometown.

MN: Is that how Rook got the scar?

BL: You got it.

MN: And Rand?

BL: Rand is fun to write. Except for Yellow, he was my favorite New Gen character. Rand is just your all-around nice guy, and I kind of use him as the sounding board for the others: older-boy crush to Annie, drinking buddy for Lunk, down-to-earth foil for Yellow, and sincere brother for Sera. He's probably the most genuine and loving character in the show. I like Rand a lot.

MN: You kind of made Lunk into this Rambo guy.

BL: Not at all! Jim Cooper is a sweet, nice fellow, but he was a soldier for a long time, and in defense of his family he's utterly ruthless. He's what Scott Bernard wishes he could be: the good king. Jim is the "mother" of the group, and his life revolves around his home and his family. Jim in many ways is a very feminine character, and I like that about him.

MN: Now the biggies! Lancer—

BL: You mean Yellow. He gets his real name back halfway through *Aftermath*. Yellow Lancer was another one of his dramatis personae.

MN: You really made him a..."pretty boy..."

BL: "Faggy" is more like it. He's another in a long line of faggy, androgynous manga heroes that I love so much. Ever see *Eight Man*? Or any of those old Juné magazines? I'm kind of faggy myself and I like to draw my leading guys that way. Manga has a long history of AC/DC guy heroes, and damned if I'm going to change it.

MN: But the focus of the story is his hetero relationship with Sera!

BL: This is licensed product, not my own stuff. Blame the Baptists.

MN: Sera is a much different character in *Aftermath* than in the TV show.

BL: Sera is basically half sweet teenage girl and half Florence Henderson. She is a fully human being—the TV show established that—yet she's also connected to this wild power out in the universe next door and it's

kind of freaking her out. But her background as part of the Hive and the perspective it gave her has carried over into a very human wisdom, the kind of "big picture" most people don't see until their golden years. In some ways, Sera is as old as the Invid, and that kind of maturity shows, if only on an unconscious level.

MN: Do you like Sera?

BL: As a character? oh, I do, I do! She's like your dream girlfriend as a high-schooler: sweet, pretty, bossy in a caring, motherly sort of way. She's full of life and almost frighteningly talented. And yet you never feel put off by all that. It's hard to write a character like that and not get saccharin, but the kids seem to like her. And she's got great hair.

"...I think the door is open to use the Zentaedi as sort of the Klingons for Robotech."

Sera: she's magic, a protoculture by-product, and her hair smells terrific!

MN: Which we see a lot of.

BL: I admit it:. I love to draw hair. You grow up reading Leiji Matsumoto broomstick-blonde space operas and see if you don't! Sera has one of those round, milkmaid, Dairy Queen faces and big turquoise eyes, and has this fully-developed zaftig look to boot. Is it any surprise that Maggie is my favorite *Love & Rockets* character?

MN: She's solidly built.

BL: No doubt. She's built like the St. Pauli Girl, kind of like Mo *(Mundee Henderson, Lewis' wife.)* Sera, as we used to say in Texas, is a "big ol' gal." I like her that way.

MN: Finally, there's your "bad guys", Hohsq and Chaver.

BL: And don't forget Heunneinnian. Hohsq in many ways is the best character in *Aftermath.* He's certainly the deepest.

MN: We get to hear him thinking, which I thought was a no-no.

BL: True, I don't generally use thought balloons, captions, or sound effects, but in order to get twelve issues of story in six issues of *Aftermath,* I had to compromise somewhere.

MN: Bill Spangler had a real affinity for the Zentraedi. Do you?

BL: I hope so. I think Bill really created the Zentraedi, with all his background and language stuff. They became people instead of "bionoids", and that's fun. Now there's a fairly consistent background and history to them, I think the door is open to use the Zentraedi as sort of the Klingons for *Robotech.*

MN: The "honorable enemies".

BL: The words "T'Sen Trati" mean "honorable warriors" in Tiresian.

MN: Gospel according to Macek?

BL: Gospel according to Bruce Lewis, King of All Manga.

MN: Where from here?

BL: To issue six. The plot resolves there and that's it as far as I know today. I have several complete story arcs that kick-off in the post-series scenario, but there's just no way to know if *Aftermath* will continue beyond issue six.

MN: Poor sales?

BL: Not at all! We did far better than expected on number one, and a lot of places sold out. Numbers dropped back a bit for number two, but we did very well for a black and white book. We outsold a lot of "hip" titles that get plenty of free press. I'll let the reader look up the actual titles; you know who they are.

MN: So the fans like it?

BL: Screw the fans. They wanted me to do *The End of The Circle,* but even when I pointed out that Random House owns that story and that I had no right to adapt it, they still bleated. Well, to hell with 'em. The mail on *Aftermath* is heavy and it runs about 5-1 positive. The kids—not the "fans"—know a good story when they see it and they write me letters telling me so. I'm totally happy with the reader response to this book.

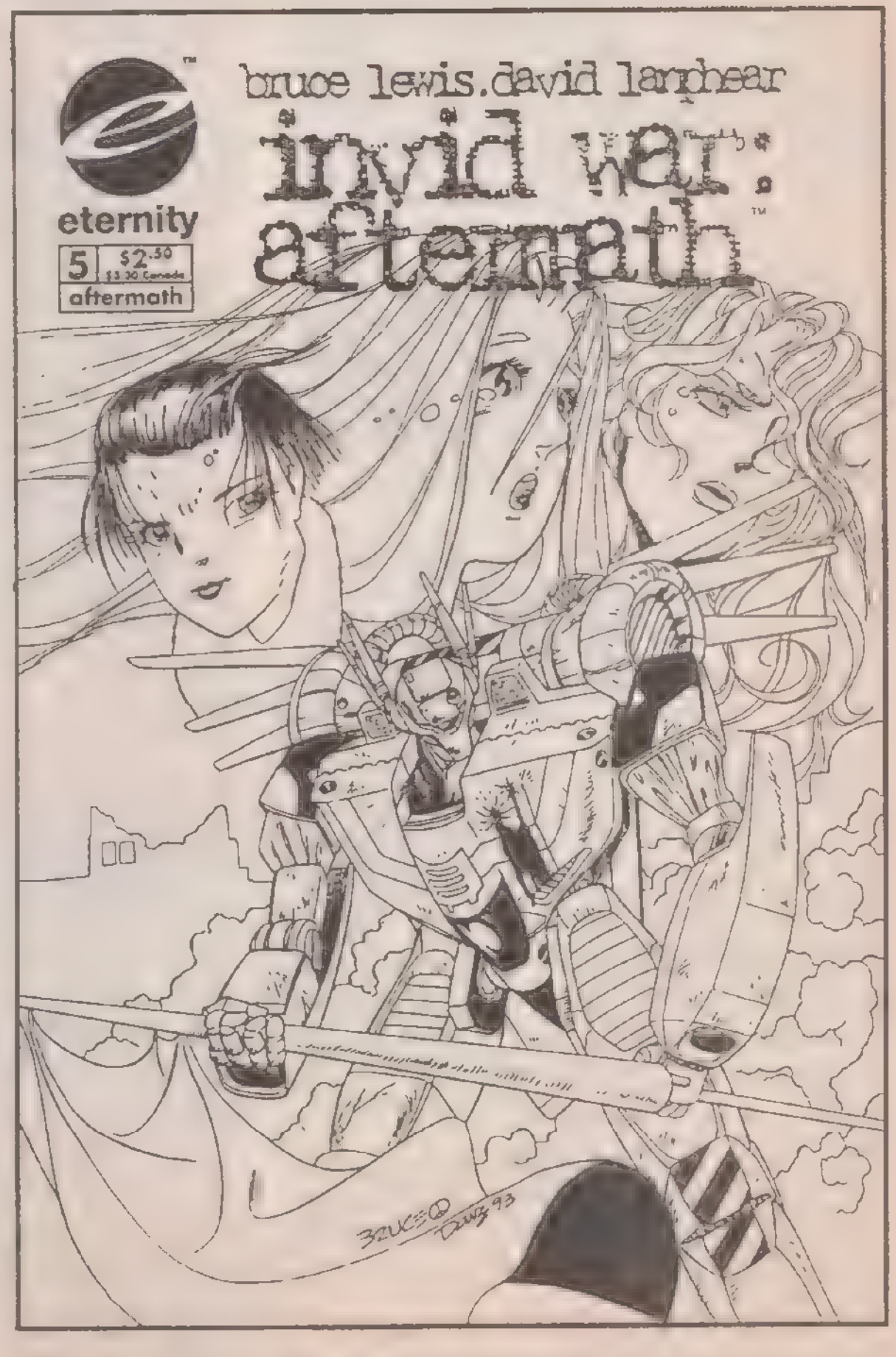
MN: Too bad there aren't more of them.

BL: Take a good look at black-and-white comics, kids, because this is the end of the line. The market is collapsing and black and white will be the first to go. It's sad, but *Aftermath* in many ways is the swan song of non-superhero b&W cartooning in America. When the crash comes, it's going to take a lot of people with it, no matter how good their comics are.

MN: So this is the end of an era for *Robotech?*

BL: Shiigata ga nai, neh? More's the pity.

"Aftermath in many ways is the swan song of the non-super hero black and white cartooning in America."



Will there be an aftermath to Aftermath? To borrow a quote from a famous commercial, "Read the book!"

movie review: CITY HUNTER

by Michael Palmaira

The City Hunter Movie was released in Hong Kong at the end of January just in time for the Chinese New Year. This live-action film, based on the popular Japanese manga, opened to rave reviews and a huge box office. It then made its American premiere at Chicago's **School of the Art Institutes Film Center** on March 6, where it kicked off their month long celebration of oriental films, entitled *From the Heart of Hong Kong.* All showings for the movie were sold out within a few short hours!

The City Hunter Movie stars Jackie Chan as the detective Ryu Saeba, a man who is not only well known for his skills as a professional gunman for hire (often called a "sweeper" or "city hunter"), but as a lecherous skirt-chaser as well. Ryu is hired to find the missing daughter of a wealthy newspaper tycoon, and one look at her photo instantly brings him into action. At girl-crazy mode, he can do anything! The plot itself works more as an excuse for a series of episodic chase scenes that include a wild skateboard ride through a busy street, a floating casino hijacking, incredible gunplay such as Ryu and Saeko's combination of ballroom dance and target shooting, and a whole lot of incredible stunts that only Jackie Chan can deliver.

While the film does have its flaws, it uses them to its own advantage. For instance, the city hunter character is a perfect role for Jackie Chan, whose stylized performance of rapid movements and superb agility give new dimensions to the character. But unfortunately, he looks nothing like the manga character he is suppose to portray, and the filmmakers know it! It becomes sort of a running gag throughout the entire movie. The very first scene in the film opens with a picture of Ryu Saeba from the original manga. His tall muscular build and chiseled chin are very familiar to us. Then it cuts to a close-up of Jackie Chan, who is short with rather long untrimmed hair and minus the crafted facial features of the manga character. The first reaction for some is to laugh. They just don't look alike. But it's all played off very well.

And it's not just his looks that are targeted for laughs, but also his age. Jackie Chan is already hitting 40, and his character is supposed to be somewhere in his late twenties. In order to make up for this, the filmmakers have him surrounded by a very youthful cast of teen idols, who refer to him as "kid". Phrases such as "Hey, stop that kid!" or "That kid got away!" are common throughout the movie. Among his young co-stars are a couple of undercover policewomen with a suitcase full of weapons, a gambler who can throw playing cards into people's foreheads, and of course, Ryu's female partner

Kaori. There is also a duo of Chinese rappers who sing a rather lengthy rap song during the cruse, but end up just getting in the way of things.

Regrettably, the movie has replaced Ryu Seaba's sexual urges with a longing for food. While is does generate some good laughs, it still veers away from the traits of the original character. Jackie Chan not only spends most of his time hungry, but for most of the beginning, he is thoroughly intoxicated, yet his dreams are filled with beautiful women. Most of the lechery is performed by Kaori's wimpy cousin who is constantly after Kaori with proposals of marriage and hopes of bunking down together.

His ridiculous pursuits get him into troublesome situations with the movie's villain, played by a suave American who is ruthless as he is handsome. His mission is to rob everyone on board, but first they each must play a game of blackjack with him. If they lose, they get shot. If they win, they play another game. The actor, who could speak only English, had his voice dubbed over by a Chinese voice actor, and no matter how you look at it, dubbed movies look funny, both Japanese and English. Though I do wonder if this movie were to ever be dubbed into English, would they bring back the villain's original voice?

Some of the manga gags do show up in the movie and are surprisingly well executed. The mega-ton hammers that Kaori pulls out of thin air show up twice. And the hand signs for "I Love You" are used by Kaori as she surrenders to overwhelming odds after an unsuccessful and embarrassing escape attempt. One particular scene is taken directly from the popular *Street Fighter 2* arcade game. Jackie Chan actually portrays several of the video game characters, most notably Chun Li, in which he giggles and jumps around just like the arcade character. This entire scene is played out at superfast motion, in order too replicate the look of a video game. It is by far the highlight of the entire film!

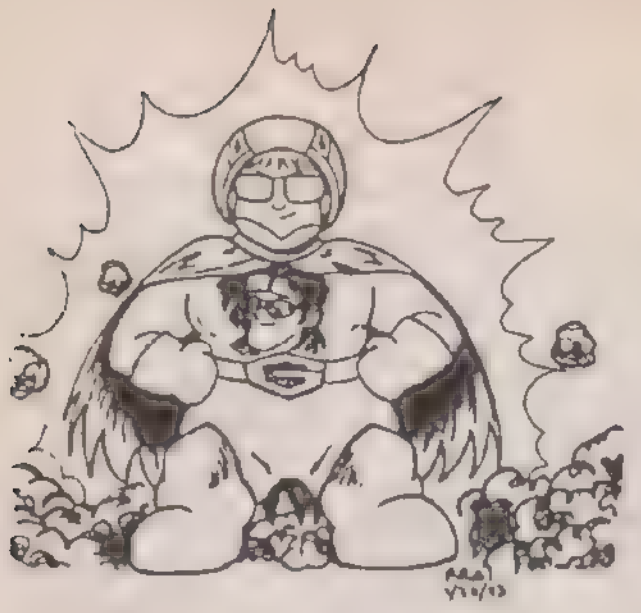
Other elements from the manga make brief appearances or are said in some off-hand way. For instance, Ryu's little red car is only allowed a cameo glimpse in the city hunter's garage, and Umibozu is just mentioned over a telephone call.

I have also noticed that the video release of the movie is missing several scenes that were shown in the theatrical release. One, for example, was during the scene where the girls, with Kaori's cousin tagging along, try to lure a guard away with their sultry charms, but instead the guard makes a move on Kaori's cousin! That was a very funny scene. Too bad it was cut out.

The City Hunter Movie overall is probably the most successful anime-to-live-action transition ever to be done so far. It's sad to say that other films such as **The Guyver, Wicked City,** and **Crying Freeman** have not been able to capture the essence of the original anime. Often they are changed so much in order to suit the filmmakers taste, that it is difficult to even see where the original influence came from.

The City Hunter Movie was directed by Wong Jing, who manipulates visuals around Jackie Chan in order to enhance the comedy aspects of the story. Co-stars include Hong Kong's most famous ghost, Joi Wong, of a **Chinese Ghost Story I, II,** and **III,** and idol singer, Leon Lai, of last years **The Magic Touch.**

Here is a movie that is shamelessly silly, yet thoroughly entertaining. It is an action-comedy of the highest caliber, so don't miss out in any opportunity to see it!



Gaver-sensei's pocket reviews

The opinions and views expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect those of this publication

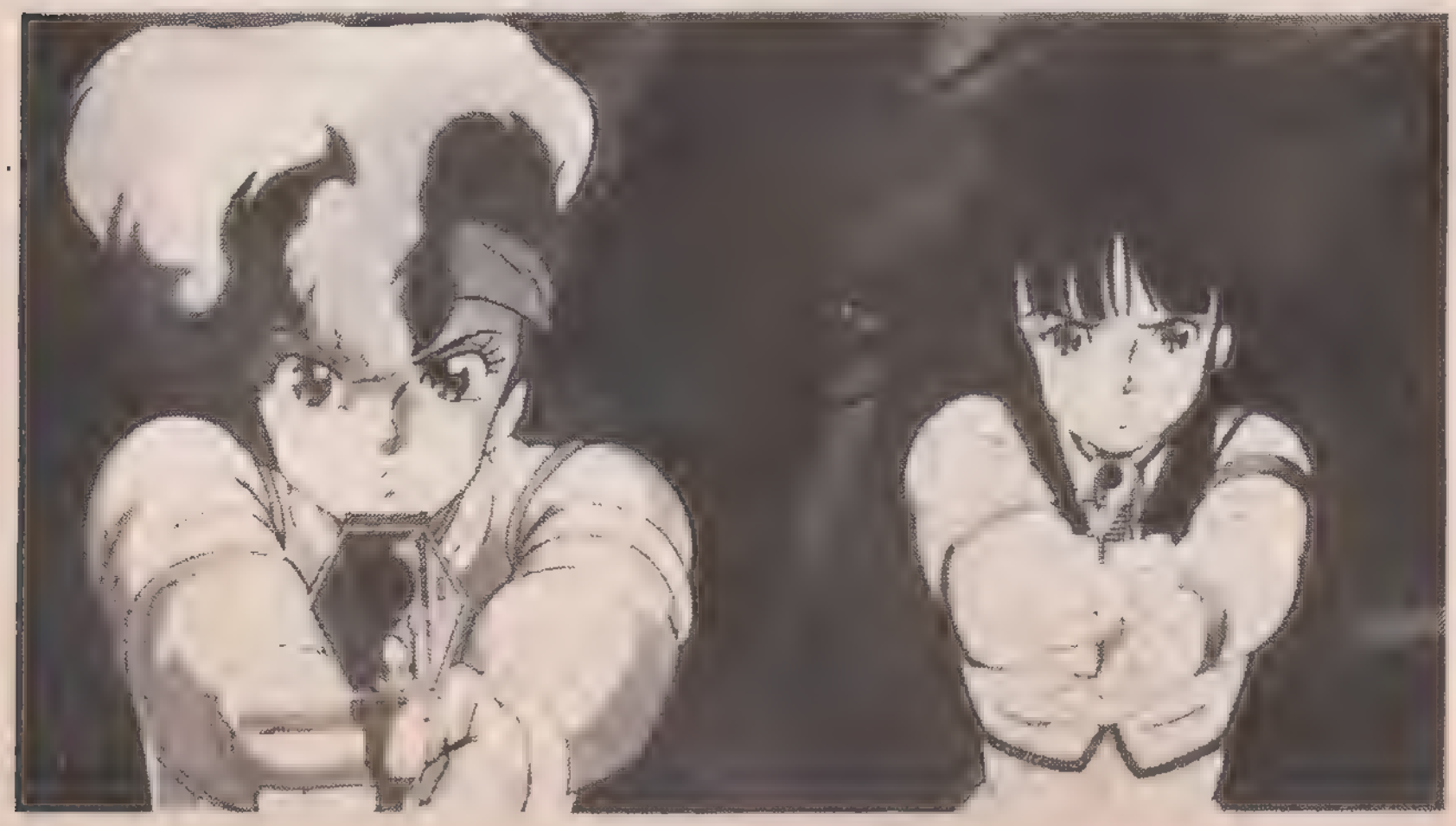
Dirty Pair - The Affair on Nolandia
(Streamline Pictures 60 min, dubbed)

The original video incarnation of "The Dirty Pair" (although don't let them hear you call them that) falls very flat in most areas and is a disappointing debut in America for the Lovely Angels.This is not entirely the fault of the english language version.

A plot involving a psychic child that is only slightly less muddled and confusing than Akira only adds to the film's mediocrity. Voice acting is average at best, the main characters' (Kei & Yuri) seem out of place with each other, though many (not all) minor characters are okay. A few seemingly out of place colloquialisms get in the way of some of the already flimsy original dialogue. The video's film master seems to have had an inordinate amount of dirt and "noise" and it made for bad video picture quality. **Overall grade: C-**

AnimEigo Super Deformed Double Feature
(*Scramble Wars* and *Ten LIttle Gall Force*)
(AnimEigo, 67 min, subtitled)

Definitely one of the most fun titles to date. This double feature contains both the Artmic "super-deformed" videos. *Ten Little Gall Force* is a hilarious, slapstick parody of the "behind the scenes" of *Gall Force*. *Scramble Wars* takes the premise of all of Artmic's characters participating in a road rally taken right from the "pages" of *The Wacky Races*.



An incredible number of inside jokes ranging from behind the scenes production techniques to obscure japanese TV drama, too obscure and detailed to be explained in the video, are well pointed out in the included liner notes. Only an average soundtrack, but that's not what we're looking to see in these titles, right? **Overall grade: A-**

Battle Angel
(A.D. Vision, 70 min, subtitled)

Containing the two *Gunnm* (retitled *Battle Angel Alita* in the U.S.) stories, Battle Angel tells the story of Gally, a female cyborg who is found broken and revived by a "Cyber-Doctor," but with no memory of her past. She becomes a bounty hunter ("Hunter-Warrior") with some reluctance, first to help Dr. Ido, and later her friend Yugo who is attempting to break free of Scrap Iron City and escape to the "luxury" of the floating city of Zaiem. Based on the manga by Yukito Kishiro, *Battle Angel* is one of the better action stories of late, with excellent character designs and above average animation. It is, at times, very enthralling and disturbing (containing one of the scariest "off-screen" killings in anime). Titles are crisp and clean, though at times dialogue seems a bit too cliche (Americanized). The only drawback is the lack of a continuation to the story, which may be to come later. **Overall Grade: B+**

Ranma 1/2 TV Volume 1
(Viz Video, 50 minutes, dubbed)

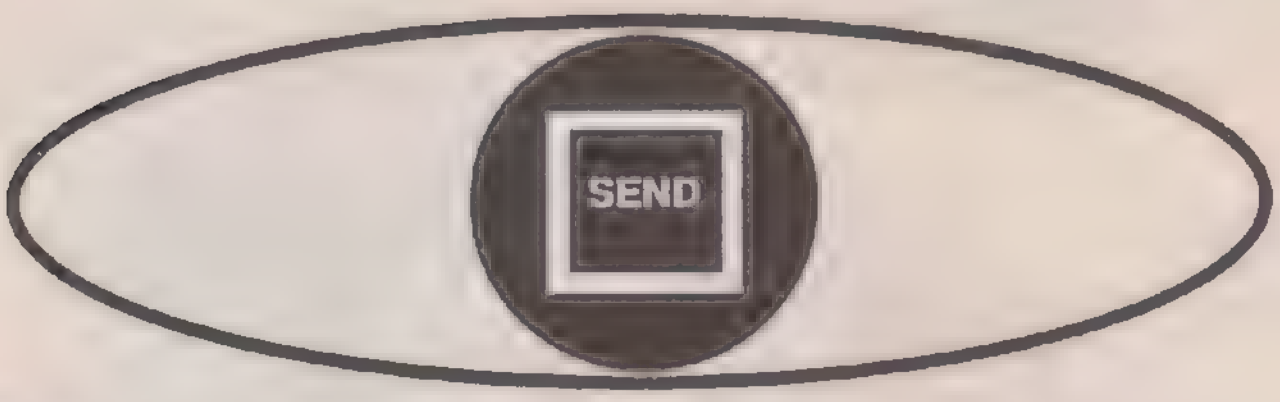
Perhaps the most anticipated new title of 1993, in part because of its inherent popularity, but mostly because it was the first entry of Viz Communications into the videos and that it would be (horror of horrors) *dubbed*. Much was expected of the collaboration of Viz and the dubbing production studio, Ocean Studios, a well-experienced studio in Vancouver, Canada. For those who do not know the story of *Ranma 1/2*, well . . . I can't explain it in this

Viz Comics gets into the video biz

short of space but what the heck. It's the story of a young martial artist who, after obtaining a curse which changes his gender, has to return to Japan to meet his parent-arranged fiance.

A swell of hype began when the video was first due to be released. While the final result is of considerably higher quality than nearly all previous dubbed releases, there is still much room for improvement. The male Ranma voice has got to go, being at least 4 years too young. Genma and Soun have yet to really getå into their characters, not acting nearly as "over-the-top" as the characters truly are. A few characters, like Nabiki, fit rather well and the translation is relatively rewrite-free. Most of the problems appear to be ones that can be overcome by becoming more familiar with the material in future volumes. **Overall grade: B-**

The NetWatch



by
Russel
Rezaian

Fandom and computers. A terrifying combination. Most people who have computers and modems use BBS's, electronic bulletin board systems, to exchange ideas, hearsay, and keep in contact with other people with similar interests. It seems logical that anime fans are going to get into the act too. Well we have, and in a pretty big way.

I am sure that many people are familiar with at least one or two anime related BBS's, there are even a few good ones close by. But a local BBS usually is just that, local. There is a whole world out there that can be reached by computer, and it is a world that anime fans are a vocal part of. I am speaking of national, and international networks of computer systems. Networks that connect fans of nearly every conceivable thing from all around the world, with eachother.

There are many networks and services that blanket the nation. There are services like **CompuServ, Genie, PeopleLink,** and **PCLink.** All of these have sections where fans get together and talk. But there is something that all of these networks have in common, *they all cost money*, and they all pretty much limit the geographical area they cover. There are alternatives though, and these are what I am going to talk about here.

One major international network is **FidoNet**. This is a network of almost entirely IBM PC compatible computers, though other computers are starting to join (most notably the Amiga systems), that blankets the globe.

There are *Fido* systems in the U.S., Canada, Europe, the U.K., Greece, Japan, South America, and many other places.

Fido works by having a local PC running some sort of BBS software exchange mail and messages with other *Fido* BBS's in the area. From there things move up the ladder to bigger systems that connect regions until it becomes possible to get a *Fido* message all over the world.

In *Fido* there are two message groups called echos that anime fans will be interested in. The **Anime Echo** (gee, that one's a big surprise), and the **Toons Echo.**
The *Anime Echo* pretty much speaks

for itself. All over the country people engage in long distance discussion of the latest gossip, the latest news, and the latest "hot" anime to watch. Every day as many as a few hundred new messages get sent out from all over, enough to keep anyone at their terminal for at least a little while.

Of slightly different interest is the *Toons Echo* where fans of non Japanese animation get together to talk about whats hot, and to ask the unanswerable trivia questions that SOMEBODY out there MUST have the answer to ("Where can I get an original *Don Bluth Dragon's Lair Video Disc*?").

Another major international network, this one of a completely different nature, is USENET. Unlike *Fido*, USENET runs mainly on Mainframe and Mini computers, typically in large universities. USENET links nearly the entire world, there are USENET sites all over both north and South America. USENET covers Europe and the U.K., USENET even reaches inside the Soviet Union. USENET is in Africa. USENET is in Southeast Asia, and there is no way that Japan could be left out. USENET is big.

On USENET one can get the latest scoop on anime straight from Japan in the rec. arts anime newsgroup where anime fans around the world get together and talk about what's going on and what interests them. This makes for some interesting experiences. How many people are aware that we poor deprived anime fans in the Chicago are actually saw parts of the new ***Gundam OVA*** series months before it was even released in Japan? Who says we get everything 6 months later . . . From USENET we find out that ***Tiny Toon Adventures*** is playing in Japan and that the voice players of Nao Izumi from *Kidou Keisatsu Patlabor*, and Ryouga from *Ranma Nibun no Ichi* are moonlighting as the voices of Barbara Ann "Babs" Bunny, and Plucky Duck.

USENET too has other groups devoted to non Japanese animation. There is rec. arts animation which is much like the *Fido Toon Echo*, where people can get together and talk about the best gallery to buy cells from mail order, and where to get the CD soundtrack for *"The Last Unicorn"* (Germany).

But USENET, being as big as it is, has even more room. Both of the groups I have mentioned are in the rec. arts hierarchy. The rec. part means all groups starting with this are devoted to recreational topics as opposed to computer oriented (comp), scientific (sci), sociological (soc), or other broad classifications. The arts part simply means that we aren't talking about something like soccer (rec. sport soccer), but about some art form. There is one other top level hierarchy that is a catch all for things that aren't quite big enough, or general enough to fit elsewhere. This is the *alt* (for alternate) set of groups. In *alt*, all sorts of strange topics find homes, and one that might be a surprise to some is *alt. tv tinytoon.* Yes, ***Tiny Toon Adventures*** has its very own newsgroup in USENET, and it gets more traffic than even rec. arts animation sometimes.

In both USENET and *FidoNet*, people can give their tidbits of wisdom, or posers of perplexity, a wider hearing then through nearly any other channel. In both, people from around the world can talk to each other, and sometimes even make friends. In both a weary anime fan can find new vistas. Try them out if you get a chance, you might enjoy yourself!

In a companion article dealing with Anime related BBS's, I will discuss how to connect with either of these networks. In future articles. I might discuss the history, and even manners of the nets. After all, to be forewarned is to be forearmed, and we could all use an extra pair of hands now and again..!

ROBOTECH ONLINE ECHO

For Robotech fans interested in finding other online fans, the following is a list of BBS sites participating the the Robotech Echo.

The Tachyon Express
Home of the Robotech Echo
FIDOnode 1:3639/36
(803)242.8874

The Amiga Legend
FIDOnode 1:3651/7
(803)383.6369

Computer Control Center
FIDOnode 1:3651/2
(803)332.1370

Fly By Night
FIDOnode 1:3651/6
(803)673.0621

On Line After Late Night
FIDOnode 1:3625/454
(205)666.0932

Cool World BBS
FIDOnode 1:151/174
(919)848.8904

Assimilation HQ
FIDOnode 1:364/7
(803)296.2870

Citadel of the Ancients
FIDOnode 1:280/368
(919)451.7775

The Final Nightmare BBS
FIDOnode 1:3623/8
(904)239.6809

Centennial BBS
FIDOnode 1:161/518
(707)644.2161

Bloom County BBS
FIDOnode 1:3627/210
(803)293.3830

Anime Archive
FIDOnode 1:114/181
(602)863.6599

M.O.S! BBS
FIDOnode 1:3623/19
(904)428.0776

Amiga Express BBS
FIDOnode 1:379/21
(704)882.2243

The Innocents
FIDOnode 1:107/653
(908)615.9052

Whizard's Tower
FIDOnode 1:3651/8
(803)332.9758

Pendragon
FIDOnode 1:105/121
(206)573.4960

Sanctuary
FIDOnode 1:105/108
(206)260.4890

The Convent BBS
FIDOnode 1:3623/12
(904)257.1954

The Drooling Vegetables
FIDOnode 1:3651/4
(803)661.5816

Crypt Keeper BBS
FIDOnode 1:321/118
(413)586.2105

If none of the above-listed BBS sites are near you, just ask your local sysop to pick up The Robotech Echo. We'll gladly connect it for them. Most of the listed boards also carry a wide variety of Robotech- and anime-related files. Take some time to look around.

–Todd Hill/Shadow Stalker
Moderator, The Robotech Echo

ALLRIGHT...I'M UPSET! I CLIMB UP THIS ROCK TO FIND THE PRIEST WHO CAN HELP ME CHANNEL MY NATURAL ABILITIES TO MANIPULATE MAGIC, AND THE OLD GEEZER ISN'T HERE. FINE! JUST GREAT...

I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY HE DIDN'T PUT A **LEASH** ON HIS WATCHDOG!

IKEDA

THE MYSTIC NINJA

CREATED BY
RICHARD JORDAN AND DAVID RIOS

WRITTEN AND PENCILLED BY
RICHARD JORDAN

INKED BY
DAVID RIOS

CRUNCH!

MEAN, THERE IS A **LAW** ABOUT THIS SORT OF THING!

BRUTUS KILL!!!

HUH?

YOU'RE NOT VERY SWIFT ARE YOU?

I MEAN PHSYCALLY..

KRAK!

MENTALLY I'M SURE YOU'RE JUST FINE.

FWAP!

I'LL BET YOU'RE AN ASTRO-PHYSICIST... PROFESIONALLY.

WHUMP!

YOU'RE A MINDLESS, GRUNTING OAF IN YOUR SPARE TIME, RIGHT?

ROAR

OH! AND A **SINGER**, TOO. HUH?

WELL, **PLAY TIME'S** OVER, BRUTUS

IT'S BEEN FUN. **ADIOS!**

ZOFT

ENOUGH!

YES, I AM THE ONE YOU SEEK.

YOU! YOU'RE...!

AND YOU ARE **IKEDA.** I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU. YOU WISH TO COMBINE MY TECHNIQUES WITH THOSE OF THE **NINJA.**

HMM.. PERHAPS, YOUNG MAN.

YES, MASTER.

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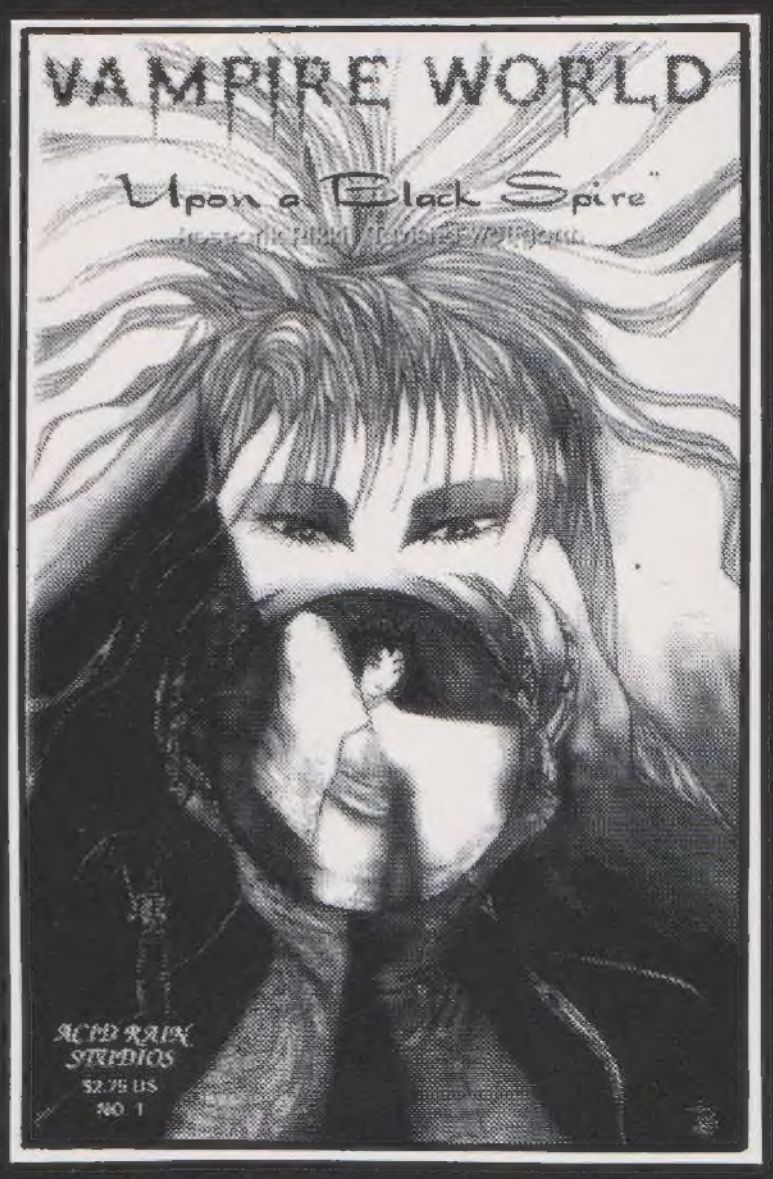
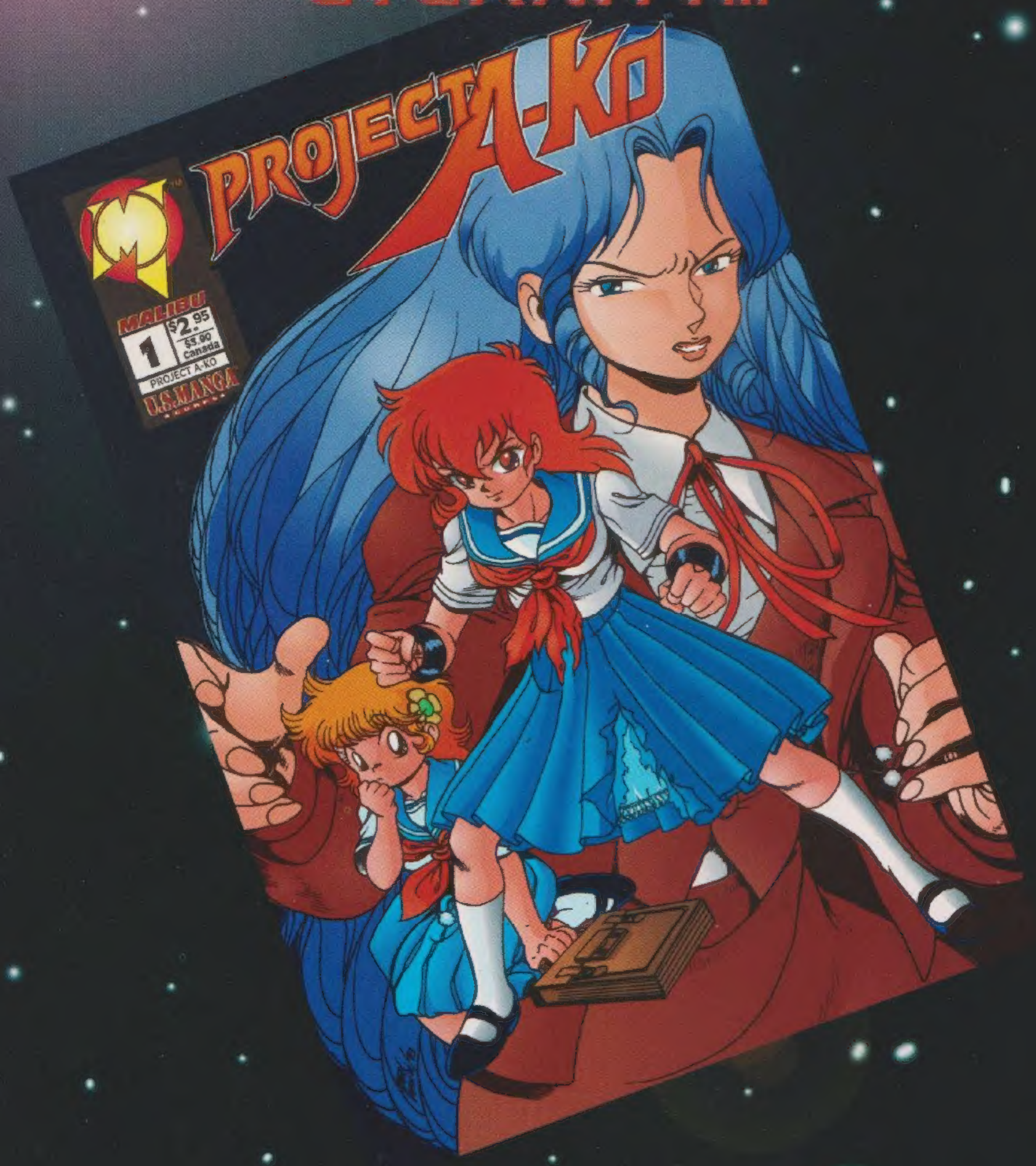
THE HUNT!



THE BIGGEST BLAST THIS SIDE OF ETERNITY...



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